CHILDREN INSPIRED BY REVOLUTIONARY IDEOLOGIES....

"THERE WERE NO EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN KILLED. I ASSURE YOU. I AM PAPA DOC. EVERYONE CALLS ME PAPA DOC."

AMNESTY, THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE-WINNING RIGHTS ORGANIZATION BASED IN LONDON, SAID LAST WEEK THAT 50 TO 100 CHILDREN PROTESTING COMPULSORY SCHOOL UNIFORMS DIED OR WERE KILLED APRIL 18 IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE CAPITAL OF BANGUI.

AT A NEWS CONFERENCE AFTER HIS ARRIVAL HERE, EMPEROR BOKASSA SAID: "WE INVITE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO GIVE PROOF OF THEIR INFORMATION AT THE END OF THE SUMMIT."

THE BANGUI GOVERNMENT'S OFFICIAL NEWS AGENCY REPORTED THURSDAY NIGHT THAT THE EMPEROR, SPEAKING TO A GROUP OF DIPLOMATS, EMPHATICALLY DENIED THAT SCHOOLCHILDREN WERE MASSACRED.

MORE 1047

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
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AM-CHILDREN 2 KIGALI

FRENCH GOVERNMENT SOURCES HAVE SAID THAT SOME STUDENTS WERE KILLED IN BANGUI APRIL 18. EMPEROR BOKASSA DID NOT DENY THERE WERE DEATHS ON THAT DAY.

HE TOLD THE NEWS CONFERENCE: "IT WAS STUDENTS IN THEIR FINAL YEAR WHO DEMONSTRATED FIRST IN JANUARY, ON 18, 19, 20, ABOUT THEIR SCHOLARSHIPS.

"THEY STAGED A REVOLT. THEN THEY PROTESTED ABOUT THEIR UNIFORMS, WHICH THEY NOW WEAR."

FRENCH OFFICIAL SOURCES IN KIGALI SAID FRANCE WAS CUTTING ALL ECONOMIC AND FINANCIAL AID TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN EMPIRE, A FORMER FRENCH COLONY, UNTIL THERE WAS A FULL EXPLANATION FROM THE EMPEROR ABOUT THE DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH LED TO THE REPORTED KILLINGS.

EMPEROR BOKASSA, WHO DESCRIBED THE MASSACRE REPORT AS A SLANDEROUS CAMPAIGN OF LIES, SAID HIS OWN FAMILY INCLUDED STUDENTS.

"AMONG THESE STUDENTS THERE ARE MY OWN CHILDREN," HE SAID. "I AM FATHER OF A LARGE FAMILY. I HAVE 30 CHILDREN."

REUTER 1049